

I AM entering into a discussion which I consider an ambiguous subject. The ambiguity arises from the word "democratic." Athens, before the domination of Philip was a democracy. Rome, before Julius Caesar was republic. Great Britain is today considered by all to be a democratic society. Russian communists claim that their system is a people's democracy. And Mussolini once said that the Facist State was eminently democratic. All these forms of polity, in theory and practice, have something in common and therefore "democracy" is meaningless unless defined.

**What is needed
to
Achieve Democracy
in its
Fullest Meaning?**

he does not prejudice the rights of others.

Democracy, however, is not only a political or an economic system; it is, above all, a way of social life. Man, in his dealings with others, is expected to be just — he is expected to look into the welfare not only of himself but also of his fellowmen, especially those who are less fortunate. Maritain, quoting Bergson, writes that "democracy is evangelical in essence — and its motive power is love."

Love of our fellowmen is an expression of our love of God. Pope

Democracy - A Fact or an Ideal?

As a form of government, its basis of development is rooted in man's demand for equality, a demand that the system of power be erected upon the similarities and not upon the differences between men. Whether young or old, whether rich or poor, one is treated before the law as a man, with equal rights and privileges as others. Man is treated not as a machine who must work for the state but as a person endowed with certain inalienable rights and freedoms upon which the state cannot encroach. Man is treated not as a child to be fed by the state but as a matured individual left to his own initiative. The state does not tell him how to work, or when to start business, or what to study; he is to use his own judgment. He is to practice autonomy in his participation of the processes of government, without which participation, democracy would be a shadowy figment — because, an exclusion from a share in benefit. Hence, the government is only a tool for coordination rather than an originating source of command or power. It recognizes the right of men to share in the results of social life as broadly equal; it regards the differences of treatment as justifiable only in so far as it can be shown to be directly relevant to the common good. So there is complete harmony between the state and the people. The state serves and protects the people, and the people in turn, render obedience to state



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promulgations in so far as they are for the common good.

In addition there can be no politics without economics. No political mechanisms will of themselves enable the common man to realize his wishes and interests, unless there be equality of economic opportunity. Thus, democracy allows private ownership — it sanctions private enterprises for private gain. Man can engage in any business as he pleases, as long as

Leo XIII in his Encyclical Letter wrote that in its work, "the Church must be credited with a watchful care over all classes of society, and especially those whom fortune has least favored."⁽¹⁾ The reason is obvious. The rich can take care of themselves, while the poor need somebody's assistance. But of course while looking after the advantage of the working people we should not act in such a manner as to forget the upper classes of society. The wealthy are also of the greatest use in preserving and perfecting society. As has been explained, we are one body and co-important in the Mystical Body of Christ.

This evangelical aspect of democracy is the "missing link" of our modern democracy. And this can only be brought about by religion — by a return to God. Unless love dwells in the hearts of men there can be no democracy. Sad as it is, our present-day democracy have still a long way to attain perfection. Democracy today is still an ideal to be achieved, a hope to be fulfilled.

Take for example the United States, the "Father of Democracy." The citizens of the District of Columbia, roughly 800,000 in number, are not allowed to vote either in the national or municipal elections because of Negro majority. Is there equality in the participation of go-

(1) Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, p. 68

(2) Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Christian Democracy*, p. 4.

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vernment processes where freedom of suffrage is denied by reason of what is considered an inferior color? The theoretical answer is "no"—but in practice we are doing it. Why? Because we are selfish—because we do not know God.

The influence of big money in the government is another ill of the present-day democracy. The first ten amendments of the American Constitution were an addition made by a privileged group for the interest of the propertied few—. Ferdinand Lunberg, in his book, *America's 60 Families*, stated that the "government has been the indispensable handmaiden of private wealth since the origin of society."³ John D. Rockefeller habitually contributed large funds to the Republican Party in return for lucrative concessions he received from the government.⁴ Calvin Coolidge, U.S. President from 1923 to 1929 was said to be under the domination of Thomas Lamont of the J. P. Morgan & Company, whom Coolidge invariably consulted before ever announcing any decision of the moment.⁵ Now, is there economic equality where a single individual could have a law passed in favor of his business enterprise? Democracy recognizes the freedom of man to engage in any business, but only in so far as the rights of others are not encroached.

The insufficiency of education is another draw-back in the development of our modern democracies. How many, for example, understand such concepts as freedom, democracy and religion? A man may go to war and he will tell you he is fighting for freedom — for democracy. But ask him what freedom is, and he is lost. Does freedom mean the right to do anything you please? No—it means the right to anything in so far as it leads you to God. We are not free from God we are free for God. That is why democracy calls for education of the truth. It calls for information for the public. But this is wanting in our modern democracies. Is the public, for example, informed of the background of such persons as Quirino, Osias, Perez and other big politicians? If

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(3) Lunberg, *America's 60 Families*, p. 50.
 (4) *Ibid.* p. 54.
 (5) *Ibid.* p. 150.

Nora: Don't be sarcastic.

Mario: (Throwing up his hands). I give up. Women! The trouble with women is . . .

Nora and Cely: Yes?

Al: (In loud voice). Quiet!
 (The two girls look at Al, then at each other.)

Mario: (Shouts back). Mind your own business! Now, where was I?

Cely: You said the trouble with women is . . .

Mario: Let's finish the article.

Cely: "Sixth, when they get excited, their shrill voices rise two pitches higher . . . (Pauses. Lowers her voice consciously and glowers). When they get excited, their shrill voices rise two pitches higher . . ." of all the . . . He's impossible.

Nora: Of course. He's a man, Ergo, he is prejudiced. Now, if I were to answer that . . .

(Al gets up and strolls over their table. Nora stops in confusion.)

Al: (Grinning). Excuse me. But I couldn't help overhearing your conversation. I've lost my concentration. So I might as well join in the fun.

Rudy: Girls, this is the great Alfredo Isagani in person. (Pointing to Cely and Nora), Nora Laurente and Celia Guerrero.
 (Girls nod their heads to Al. Al sits down.)

Al: What's cooking?

Mario: The new Carolinian is out and a certain article has aroused a storm of controversy among the female population in general, which means these two girls in particular.

Al: Oh! And what is the article?

Rudy: "The Trouble with Women"

Al: (Taken off-guard). Why, what's the trouble with women?

Mario: that, my friend, happens to be the title of the article. And these two deadly females cannot rest in peace. And we are it.

Nora: But that's our business. We cannot just take this thing sitting down. It's a slur against the women.

Al: (Amused). And what do you propose to do about it?

Cely: Skin him alive. Why can't he be man enough to come out in the open instead of hiding under a pen name?

Mario: He's just being prudent.

Nora: What I propose is to present an article, "The Trouble with Men" and refute every statement he wrote here.

Cely: That's right! You do it, Nora. And in case you run out of ideas, I'll chip in with some of mine.

Rudy: (Drily) This sounds interesting. Very. And all because of an article.

Mario: Let's change the topic.

Cely: Sure. Let's talk about the trouble with men.

Mario: (groaning) But I don't want to talk about trouble!

Nora: (Flicking her finger at the paper). He asked for it!

Mario: (Starting). But I'm not he!

Cely: But you belong to his kind.

Al: Okay. What's the trouble with men?

Nora: (Airily) The trouble with men is that they talk about women.

Cely: (Clapping her hands). Bull's eye!

Rudy: What makes you think so?

Nora: This. This proves it. A man talks about women.

Mario: Wonderful! Such female logic! Mark, Jew, a Daniel come to judgment.

Business

Al: (Grinning again) And what else?

Nora: Men talk disparagingly, sarcastically about women's make-up but they fall flat on their faces when a pretty face, all made up, hooves into sight.

Cely: And men are conceited. Each man considers himself a fair target for a woman's charms, even if he is a harmless Milquetoast ready for the ash can.

Mario: Aw, come on. Why do we have to knock our heads off? Let's declare an armistice. You know —

"As unto the bow the cord is
So unto the man is woman
Though she bends him, she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she follows.
Useless each without the other."

Rudy: (Enthusiastically). That settles it. I always declare Wordsworth was a poet after my own heart.

Mario: (In a hurt tone). Wordsworth! That's Edgar Allan Poe. You know, the poet who had a child-wife. He was so in love with her he wrote this bow and arrow poem.

Cely: (Laughing). Mario, don't be silly. You know this is from Longfellow's "Hiawatha."

Al: You know, Mario, I've been thinking. We could use your talent in our dramatics.

Mario: Stop! I refuse to be exploited. I suggest a pleasanter topic. Mr. President, the Students University Council is sponsoring an acquaintance ball next Sunday. Right?

Al: Yes. And you are all invited of course.

Mario: Ehem. Ah, how is it, girls? Will you escort us to the dance? Our mothers won't object. (The two girls look at Al).

Cely: Well ... I ... uh ... I don't know ...

Rudy: Do you have dates for that night?

Nora: Well ... no ... but we don't want to make up our minds yet. Anyway, Sunday is still a long way off.

Rudy: Don't let Mario scare you. He's really a sheep in wolf's clothing.

Al: Sure. Why don't you all go together? I'll see you at the ball.

Cely: Who's your date, Mr. Isagani? (Al colors).

Mario: His mama doesn't trust any woman with him.

Al: No one. I mean, I have no date. I have to go early. You know, see to it that everything is okey-dokey. And a female hates to be rushed. So I'm going stag.

Nora: We'll see you there then.

Rudy: Is that settled? We'll pick you up at nine O'clock.

Cely: Okay. Be sure to bring your manners with you. (The girls smile)

Nora: (A gleam in her eyes). Mr. Isagani, you write for the college paper don't you?

Al: Why don't you call me Al? After all, we've known each other for five minutes now. Yes, I do write sometime.

Nora: You couldn't possibly have written this article, "The Trouble with Women?"

Al: W-what? That trash? That would be an insult to my reputation.

Mario: Oh, you think so? How interesting. Girls, Mr. Alfredo Isagani writes only of such things as the anatomy of the dinosaur, the history of the atom, and the people in Mars.

Al: I resent that. But I'm sorry. Nora's deduction took me by surprise and I ... uh ... well ...

Rudy: That article has its merits.

Cely and Nora: Is that so?

Mario: (Throwing up his hands dramatically). Do we have to go into that all over again?

Nora: (Smiling) No. There goes the bell. That means us, Cely.
(All stand up)

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DEMOCRACY — A FACT ...

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we are ignorant of the truth we are not free to act — we are not free to elect them.

A very important principle in democracy is the freedom to choose public officials. In the Philippines, Presidential candidates, as well as candidates of other high offices, are appointed by the members of the Party convention. Members of such convention in turn, are at times appointed not by the people but by the big-time politicians in the Provinces. The appointment, therefore, of candidates is not the will of the people but the will of the selected few. Our choice then, is limited—it is curtailed—and, therefore, freedom is curtailed. And yet we say that the basic principle of democracy is equality in the participation of the processes of government.

The good points of our present-day democracy are of course, too vital to pass over for mention. The asylums, leprosariums, the TB Pavilion, and other government institutions for the needy, deserve praise. The newspapers, radios, public libraries, Bureau of Statistics, and other sources of information shape democratic achievement which should not be overlooked. And there are still other good points which all of us already know.

Our problem, therefore, is how to achieve democracy in its fullest meaning. This can be achieved by unfolding our personal aspirations—such as freedoms, religion and autonomy which is the goal of democracy; by working up a system of religious education; by producing good leaders with fully developed personalities. Democracy does not depend on political principles alone. Neither does it depend on economic principles. It depends upon the individual citizens; upon you and I; upon love.

CALIFORNIA ...

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On and on you go, visiting many more places of interest. For there is really no end to it all. How can there be, with each new season bringing a promise of something new! And yet, as is but human, deep inside you yearn to go back and start all over again.